

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 01281 061823Z

15

ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 466

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 1639

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MANILLA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ICFTU, WCL, ELAB

SUBJECT: BRUCK RESUMES WCL POST

1. ON FEBRUARY 4, JEAN BRUCK, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR, HEADED A WCL SECRETARIAT DELEGATION AT A MEETING OF THE WCL-ICFTU JOINT WORKING COMMITTEE (CREATED LAST YEAR TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR MERGER OF THE TWO INTERNATIONALS). BRUCK SUFFERED A SEVERE NERVOUS BREAKDOWN LAST SUMMER AND IT WAS GENERALLY BELIEVED HE WOULD NEVER SUFFICIENTLY RECOVER TO RESUME HIS POST. WHILE SHOWING THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 EC BRU 01281 061823Z

EFFECTS OF HIS LONG ILLNESS, PARTICULARLY IN HIS HALTING MANNER

OF SPEECH, BRUCK APPEARS FIT AND ALERT AND IT WORKING A FULL SCHEDULE.

2. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT AT THE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING WAS AGREEMENT TO ELEVATE THE MERGER TALKS FROM THE SECRETARIAT TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD LEVEL. IT WAS TENTATIVELY AGREED THAT FOUR LEADERS FROM EACH ORGANIZATION WILL MEET IN APRIL TO SEEK WAYS OF RESOLVING THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO EVENTUAL MERGER WHICH ARE: 1) RESTRUCTURING THE ICFTU SO THAT IT WILL NOT APPEAR THAT THE WCL IS BEING MERELY ABSORBED BY THE ICFTU; 2) CREATING A MODUS-VIVENDI FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS, CLAT AND ORIT; AND 3) PROVIDING FOR AFFILIATION OF INDEPENDENT NATIONAL CENTERS FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES TO THE MERGED ORGANIZATION, WHICH DO NOT NOW BELONG TO EITHER INTERNATIONAL.

3. COMMENT: OF THE THREE OBSTACLES, THE ONLY ONE WHICH CAUSES SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE ICFTU AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PREVENT MEANINGFUL PROGRESS IN THE MERGER TALKS FOR QUITE SOME TIME IS THAT OF CLAT AND ORIT. COMPLICATING THE PROBLEM IS THE FACT THAT CLAT HAS WAGED AN EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN PARTICULARLY IN THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM, FORTIFYING THE POSITION OF WCL'S EUROPEAN AFFILIATES WHICH FOR THE MOST PART ARE ADAMANT IN THEIR INSISTENCE THAT CLAT RECOGNITION SHOULD BE A CONDITION OF MERGER. ON THE OTHER HAND ORIT HAS SHOWN NO SIGNS OF SOFTENING ITS TOTAL REJECTION OF THE CLAT'S LARGELY PAPER UNION AFFILIATES IN LATIN AMERICA.

4. ICFTU SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS SPECULATE THAT THE MERGER PROCESS COULD BE STEPPED UP IF THE FRENCH CFDT SHOULD GIVE EVIDENCE OF FULFILLING ITS REPORTED THREAT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WCL IF MERGER WITH THE ICFTU IS NOT ACCOMPLISHED SOON. MEANWHILE, THE ICFTU SEEMS PREPARED TO BIDE ITS TIME WAITING FOR WCL INITIATIVES ON THE THEORY THAT THE WCL WANTS AND NEEDS THE MERGER WHILE IT IS ONLY OF "MARGINAL IMPORTANCE" TO THE ICFTU.MORRIS

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